

Albert Adu Boahen

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Albert Kwadwo Adu Boahen (May 24, 1932 – May 24, 2006) was a Ghanaian academic, historian, and politician. He was an academic at the University of Ghana from 1959 to 1990, since 1971 as a professor. As a politician, he notably was a candidate in the 1992 Ghanaian presidential election, representing the then main opposition New Patriotic Party.

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Albert Kwadwo Adu Boahen

Born	May 24, 1932 <div>Akropong-Akuapem</div>
Died	May 24, 2006 (aged 74)
Citizenship	Ghanaian
Fields	African history
Institutions	University of Ghana, 1959–1990 professor since 1971
Alma mater	University College of the Gold Coast School of Oriental and African Studies
Known for	New Patriotic Party presidential candidate in 1992

Career

Academia

Boahen was born in Oseim to Presbyterian parents, and had his ancestral roots in Juaben-Asante. He attended religious schools between 1938 and 1947. He then spent three years at the Mfantshipim School before enrolling in history studies at the University College of the Gold Coast in Legon. He graduated in 1956.^[1] In 1959 he received a Ph.D in African history from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, as the first Ghanaian.^[2]

He was employed at the University of Ghana in 1959, and was a professor from 1971 to his retirement in 1990. He chaired the Department of History there from 1967 to 1975,^[1] as the first African to do so,^[2] and was a dean from 1973 to 1975.^[1] He also served on the editorial board of *The Journal of African History* published by Cambridge University Press,^[2] and was a visiting scholar at such institutions as the Australian

National University in 1969, Columbia University in 1970 and the State University of New York in 1990 and 1991. Between 1993 and 1999, he also worked in the UNESCO committee that published the eight-volume work *General History of Africa*.^[1]

Politics

Boahen's academic work crossed over into politics. In February 1988 he publicly lectured on the history of Ghana from 1972 to 1987. Because of this, he is credited with breaking the so-called "culture of silence" which marked the regime of President Jerry Rawlings, who had served continuously since 1981.^[2] The lectures, originally held in the British Council Hall in Accra, were published in 1998 as *The Ghanaian Sphinx: The Contemporary History of Ghana 1972-1987*.^[1]

In 1990 he co-founded the Movement for Freedom and Justice, and served as its first chairman. The ban on political parties in Ghana was lifted in 1992. In the subsequent 1992 presidential election, Boahen was the New Patriotic Party's nominee, with Roland Issifu Alhassan as his running mate for vice president.^[3] Boahen lost to Jerry Rawlings,^[1] but received 30.4% of the vote.^[4] Due to dissatisfaction with alleged ballot rigging in that election, Boahen boycotted the next Ghanaian parliamentary election in 1992.^[1] In the Ghanaian presidential election in 1996, John Kufuor stood as candidate for the New Patriotic Party, and fared somewhat better than Boahen with 39.6%.^[5] In 1998, Boahen tried to return as New Patriotic Party presidential nominee, but Kufour was chosen instead. Ultimately, Kufour won the Ghanaian presidential election, 2000 and became President.^[1]

Boahen spoke out against Marxist history early in his career. Politically, he described himself as "a liberal democrat, a believer in the freedom of the individual, the welfare of the governed, and in private enterprise and the market economy".^[1]

Legacy and death

Boahen was a member of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences,^[2] and in 2003 a Festschrift named *Ghana in Africa and the World* was released, edited by Toyin Falola. The UNESCO awarded him the Avicenna Silver Medal.^[1]

Boahen died on May 24, 2006, the same day he turned 74 years old.^[2] He left behind his wife Mary Adu Boahen and his five children. Somewhat surprisingly, Jerry Rawlings was among the mourners that paid visit to his family.^[1] He was honored with a state funeral, and in June 2006 he was posthumously awarded the Order of the Star of Ghana.^[2] John Kufour inaugurated a National Honours Day on 30 June, and several others were awarded the Order.^[6]

Partial bibliography

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- *Topics in West African History*. Harlow – London 1966
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1. Agyeman-Duah, Ivor (2 June 2006). "Albert Adu Boahen. Historian who broke Ghanaian dictator's culture of silence". *The Guardian*. Retrieved 17 June 2009.
2. "Professor Emeritus Albert Adu Boahen (1932–2006)". *Journal of African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) **47** (3): 359–361. 2006. doi:10.1017/S0021853706002441. Retrieved 17 June 2009.
3. "NPP founding father dies at 37 Military Hospital". *GhanaWeb*. 2014-04-15. Retrieved 2014-05-11.
4. Jeffries, Richard, and Claire Thomas. "The Ghanaian Elections of 1992". *African Affairs*, Vol. 92, No. 368 (Jul., 1993), pp. 331-366. stable URL (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9909%28199307%2992%3A368%3C331%3ATGEO1%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4>)
5. African Elections Database (http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html#1996_Presidential_Election)
6. "Nation to honour 165 distinguished citizens". *Ghana Review International*. 29 June 2006. Retrieved 17 June 2009.

External links

- Tribute on GhanaWeb.com (<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/artikel.php?ID=107000>)
- Another tribut on Ghanaweb.com (<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=105388>)
- Funeral pictures on flickr.com (<https://secure.flickr.com/photos/toyinfalola/sets/72157594214291621/>)

Party political offices		
First	New Patriotic Party presidential nominee 1992	Succeeded by John Kufuor

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 | University of Ghana alumni | Alumni of SOAS, University of London
 | Academics of the University of Ghana | 1932 births | 2006 deaths | New Patriotic Party politicians
 | 20th-century historians

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